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## Study Exercises

### Literacy Attendance

Literacy attendance is an alternative to the traditional attendance at the start of the day.

*Describe literacy attendance. Discuss advantages and disadvantages.*

Literacy attendance is where a teacher would greet the students individually by name and then the student is offered time to share with the class any literacy experiences connected with school. This is a beginning step for students to apply what they are learning to their lives. There will always be the shy students and the student who likes to share every day. For these types of students Miller recommended to talk with each one with encouragement or explain that everyone needs a turn and it's just as important to be a good listener. On days that everyone wants to share she stated that she has the children share with each other in groups.

Some advantages to this are it could help build community in the classroom, by giving the students something in common. Students can also get ideas from one another. There is no right or wrong answer so this could be used to help students build confidence. A disadvantage to this would be trying to keep it within a reasonable time frame. It would probably take some practice especially for a new teacher.

### Chapter 1- Guiding Principles

#### Gradual release of responsibility:

##### 1. Teacher modeling

This is where the teacher demonstrates a strategy to the students about what she is thinking about the text as she is reading it. Teacher modeling helps to show the students how to understand what they are reading by verbally showing how the teacher is making connections with the text.

##### 2. Guided practice

This is where the teacher will have a whole group lesson using the strategy, and then assign specific tasks for the children to do in smaller groups so they can practice. The teacher will help the students when needed so that they understand the strategy they are learning. He will be available to scaffold the students until they can work independently.

##### 3. Independent practice accompanied by feedback

This stage is where the teacher steps back and allows the students to use the strategy on their own with their books. The teacher will provide feedback to the students to let them know if they are using it correctly or what they need to improve on.

##### 4. Application of strategy in real reading situations

This is the stage where the students understand the strategy and they begin to correctly use it on their own with their readings. They are able to decide when, where and how to use it. The students are able to understand how the strategy helps them understand what they are reading.

*Define gradual release of responsibility and give examples.*

The gradual release of responsibility is where the teacher demonstrates a strategy to help the students comprehend the text. Then as the students master the strategy the teacher gives them more responsibility to decide for themselves when and how to effectively use the strategy. For example, if I was teaching a class on the structure of sequence text, I would introduce a strategy that helps me organize the important information and I would model to the students what I think as I read the text. We would start out practicing as a whole group, and then I would let the students work in small groups, while I walk around the room providing feedback to help the students master the strategy. After the students have a good understanding of the strategy I would let them practice on their own with their reading and give them feedback on how well they are using the strategy. I will know they have mastered the strategy when they are able to know when and how to apply it to their school work.

Chapter 2- In September

Creating a culture for thinking:

Listen and respond in respectful thoughtful ways

Using “teachable moments” the teacher can model how to listen and respond in respectful and thoughtful ways. Debbie emphasized that students need to be taught how to listen and respond in appropriate ways, they can’t just be told to do it. The teacher can model listening and responding in respectful, thoughtful ways to the students by showing that their opinions and ideas are important. Miller pointed out that this will take more than one example, but after they understand that this is the culture of the room, it will be second nature. The students will be more apt to engage in meaningful conversations about their reading by establishing this type of atmosphere.

Establish trust

It is important for the teacher to establish trust with the students to establish a community. The teacher can do this by listening to what the students say and show that their responses are valued. Also, when the teacher assigns little jobs to the students, she is demonstrating that she trusts them to complete the task.

*Discuss ways to create a “culture for thinking” early in the school year.*

When teachers take the time to really talk to the students and listen to their answers it creates a culture of trust. By creating a culture of trust between the students and the teacher this is also demonstrating how to build relationships. The students need to know that their answers are heard and valued. The students also need to be shown that they are trusted to know how to complete tasks. The teacher can give all the tools students need to succeed then step back and let them do it.

Chapter 3- Readers’ Workshop: Real Reading from the Start

Book selection

Book selection in the beginning isn’t focused on the act of reading, but learning how to be good readers. This is a time for the teacher to model what good reading looks like. The first books can be above the students’ level, the important thing is remember that they are good quality literature. Familiar books, books that are colorful with short

word passages, familiar song books and books with poems or rhymes are good books to start with. The goal is to enjoy the act of reading and enjoying it with each other.

#### Reading aloud

Reading aloud to the children should happen several times a day. This way the teacher can model to the students what fluent readers look like and how they make connections to the text as they are reading. Reading to the students can also show them that it can be for pleasure and enjoyable.

#### Use mini-lessons to model and identify reading behaviors

Using mini-lessons can help the students learn how to have good reading behaviors. For example how good readers choose their books and what they do with them when they are finished. By using mini-lessons to model to the students what good reading behaviors are, the students are able to be more independent. The mini-lessons also help the students to feel more confident in their choices and themselves.

#### *How can the procedures from Reading Workshop be applied to classrooms with a basal reading program?*

The Reading Workshop can be worked in around the basal reading program. For instance during the morning lunch count the children could be selecting a few books that interest them. Or during the day when it is social studies time the teacher could read aloud and modeling to the students what good readers look like and the behaviors good readers have. At the end of the day when the students are getting ready to go home the teacher could read from different types of books or have the students get into groups to have book talk about something that interested them.

#### Chapter 4 - Settling In

Focus on children - book selection:

(1) content- The books available for students should be what they are interested in. When the books are familiar to the students, they are able to read more even if it is a higher level.

(2) schema- This step builds on what the students know about themselves as readers and the class as a whole learns about the books. By building their schema for these two areas the students will be prepared to make good reading choices on their own.

(3) motivation- When the teacher reads selected books out loud to the students, she is sharing her enjoyment of reading with them. She is demonstrating that reading and learning can be enjoyable.

(4) variety- Students need to be exposed to different types of reading, like narrative and expository. They also need to have books from different levels so they stay interested in reading. It would be redundant to read the same type of book over and over. When students don't have variety they risk getting bored and not wanting to pursue learning about reading.

Focus on teacher - evaluation activities at the beginning of the year.

Assessments are usually given to the students at the beginning of the year to see where they are. Two mentioned in the book are: the Reader Observation Survey and the Developmental Reading Assessment. These assessments focus on where the students are in their ability to decode text, and place them in a reading level. Although, one aspect these assessments don't cover is how well the students comprehend what they are reading.

*What makes a text appropriate?*

A text that is interesting and challenging to the student. A text that is appropriate depends on the stage of reading the student is in and how much prior knowledge they have about the content in the text. It needs to be motivating and engaging for the student.

*How do you feel about teaching decoding and strategies for comprehension "side by side"?*

I personally think it is a great idea. Students learn so much when they are learning to read that it would be for their benefit to have the two side by side.

#### Chapter 5 -Schema

*Define schema as it relates to the teaching of reading. What do you know about building schema? Have any of your ideas about the importance of schema changed as a result of reading this chapter?*

Using schema in the teaching of reading is where the teacher helps the students make connections to the reading through their own experiences. One way is the self- to-text connection, when a reader makes these connections with their book they are engaged with the reading. Having the readers be engaged with their reading and making connections helps them to comprehend, which is the goal of a teacher teaching reading.

Building schema occurs over a lifetime, as a person experiences life they are building schema. No, I wouldn't say my ideas of the importance of schema haven't changed, I have always thought it is important. Although, I understand better why I personally choose certain books over others now, I prefer books that I have a schema for. So, learning this aspect, I feel is important for me as a teacher because I can utilize it to be able to better help my students learn.

#### Chapter 6 - Creating Mental Images

This is a creative, high-action chapter. *Have you had an experience similar to any of these, individually or engaged with others?*

Well, I have always been able to create mental images when I read. I don't remember being taught how to do it, I just always have. I have never seen or heard of these examples but I really like them. I think that they would definitely be an asset for any child to learn. I would like to implement these in my teaching career.

### Chapter 7 - Digging Deeper

This chapter discusses the opportunities for “deep teaching” that occur during the second semester. Think of ways that this applies to kindergarten, second, and third grade. What activities would be the same and what would be different on other grades. *Discuss alternatives to “neatly stapled stacks of worksheets” (p.98).*

I think the book club is a great idea for all grades. The content of books would probably be different according to the developmental levels of the grades. Although, I would still have a model book club, as well as, discussing and modeling what I want them to achieve for any grade.

Alternatives for “neatly stacks of worksheets” include learning how to respond to what their reading to help them understand and make connections to their reading. The goal is for the students to be able to use the response independently in any content area they need to help them. The teacher can use the responses to get an insight of where the students are in their learning and understanding of their reading. By knowing how the students are doing the teacher can then focus on what they need to better enhance their learning. Another alternative is the “work activity time”. I think this is an awesome way of letting the students make connections to their schoolwork. I also think that when the students reach the level where they are creating projects and trying ideas learned in class, is when it would be the most rewarding for the teacher and the students.

### Chapter 8 - Inferring

An anchor lesson is a carefully constructed learning opportunity that provides targeted intensive instruction, preparing children to understand and apply strategies. In this chapter, the anchor lesson demonstrates how the complexities of inferring can be introduced and taught to young readers. *Define inferring and discuss the importance of this skill for higher level learning.*

A definition for inferring could be to use one’s schema, the context clues and the pictures (if any) to better understand the text. This skill is definitely a skill that needs to be built up to. In order to be successful with inferring a student has to be able to understand abstract thinking, therefore this is an important skill for higher level learning. Especially for students who are not yet at that stage developmentally. In order for the teacher to be successful in teaching inferring it would have to be well planned. The students would need lots of practice and time to grasp such a complex concept.

### Chapter 9 - Asking Questions

“I learned that as my questions became less literal and more sophisticated, so did the children’s” (p. 124). Children can be taught that answers to questions can be found in in the text (literal), between the lines (inference), can depend on their background knowledge, and/or outside sources. *What do teachers need to understand about teaching children to use questioning to develop reading skills?*

Teachers need to understand that children will have all sorts of questions and the teacher will need to step back a let the children ask. It is important that the teacher does not limit the children on their questions. Although, the teacher may choose the important ones to focus on to support the concept being taught. I think it is also vital that teacher explicitly model the strategies and the thinking process that occurs during questioning

until the students fully understand how to question and how to find the answers. The students also need to understand that the answers could be in the text or implied or from an outside source or is no right answer. I also think that teachers need to understand that children need time to wonder, think and inquire about things. They need time to understand and full grasp what they are learning so that they can become good readers.

#### Chapter 10 - Determining Importance in Nonfiction

Determining importance in fiction depends on the reader. With fiction they make predictions "about the kinds of things they expect will happen...[nonfiction] they make predictions about the kinds of things they expect to learn" (p.145). Fiction is about characters, problems, settings, beginning-middle-ending. Nonfiction is organized around topics. the features (conventions) of nonfiction are important.

*Discuss the ways a teacher can help children to recognize and use, as aides to understanding, the features of nonfiction text.*

A teacher can help children recognize and use the features of nonfiction text by thinking aloud as the text is scanned. As the teacher models how to read the nonfiction books, and is explicitly pointing out the features, the children will have a better understanding of the layout. A convention notebook is also a great way for student to be able to have a list of the different conventions to refer to as they are learning. It enables them to be more independent in their exploring and learning.

#### Chapter 11 - Synthesizing Information

Synthesis is more than a summary. It is a vehicle through which ideas can change and grow as readers "monitor overall meaning, important concepts, and themes as they read" (p.160). *Compare the children's writing in this chapter to the writing you are seeing in local schools. Look for evidence of synthesis at your fieldwork location and describe what you are seeing.*

The writing in this book reflects a very sophisticated cognitive thinking, especially for first grade. The class I am placed in is third grade and they appear to be on the same cognitive level as the children's writings in this book, although, the third grader's level of writing is more advanced than the writings in the book. Unfortunately, I have not seen any evidence of synthesis in my placement.